



Hearing Transcript

Project:	EN010139 - Byers Gill Solar
Hearing:	Preliminary Meeting
Date:	23 July 2024

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AUDIO_BYERSGILL_PM_SESSION1_230724

00:00

Good Morning, Can I just confirm that everyone can hear me clearly, yes. Thank you. Can I also confirm with Mr. Shrimpling that live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. For those people watching the live stream, can I also advise that should we at any point agree proceedings this morning, you will be required to stop we will require to stop the live stream in order to give us clear recording of files. As a result, at the point at which we recommend to meeting in restart to livestream, you will need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted stream. I will remind you of this again, should we need to return. I'm sorry, I'm hearing some feedback on the mics. Could we just can I just make sure that everyone has the mic turned off at moment? Is that oh, that's better. Thank you. Thank you, right. So it is now 10 o'clock and it's time for this meeting. To begin. I would like to welcome you all to this preliminary meeting for an order granting development consent for the biogas scale solar energy project, an application made by our W E renewables, UK, solar and storage limited, who we will refer to as the applicant. The development proposed comprises a solar farm with over 500 megawatt capacity, ground mounted solar photovoltaic modules and associated mounting structures, inverters, transformers, switchgear and controlled equipment as substation energy storage equipment and underground on an off site cabling. Thank you all for attending this meeting. My name is Andre Pinto. I am a chartered town planner employed by the planning Inspectorate and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for leveling up for Housing and Communities as a single examining inspector to examine this application.

02:08

Good morning. My name is Max Wiltshire. I'm a chartered civil engineer and I've been appointed by the employee by the panel inspector. They've been appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government as a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application.

02:30

Good morning. My name is Alex obody. I'm a chartered transport planner employed by the planning Inspectorate. And I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for housing, communities and local government to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

02:48

together because if you take something authority, and we'll be reporting to the Secretary of State for energy security net zero with a recommendation as to whether development consent should be made. The case manager for this project is Jenny savage. Jen is being supported here today by Mr. Elliott booth and Mr. Harrison calls. If you have any queries about examination process or technology were using for virtual events, they should be your first point of contact. Their contact details can be found at the top of any letter you have received from us on the project page of the national infrastructure website. I will now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. First of all, can I ask if you want to please set all of the devices and phones to silent and also the closest toilets are

located just outside this room through the wooden doors to my right at the back of the room close to your point of entry. And there are no fire evacuation tests planned for today. Should the fire alarm sound please make your way to the nearest fire exit. There is one behind me there is one to the left and one to the right to the back of the room close to the point of entry as well. In the fire evacuation assembly point is outside the main entrance to this building. Today's a blended event in it comprises an in person meeting as well as a virtual event being held on Microsoft Teams platform for those people observing or participating through teams. In order to minimize background noise, can you please make sure that you stay muted unless you are speaking? If you are participating virtually and you wish to speak at relevant point proceedings, please use your hand up function. Please be patient as we may not get to you immediately. But we will invite you to speak at the appropriate time. I would also like to remind people that the chat function on Microsoft steam has been deactivated. So please don't try and use this at any point. If you don't manage to ask your question or raise your point. It's relevant time. There'll be an opportunity at the end of the meeting to raise this under Agenda Item seven ARB will aim to finish the hearing key Today by 1pm with a break if needed around 1130. If this happens, and we need a break, please just remember those who are participating virtually to turn the cameras and microphones off during the break. I will make sure that however you have decided to attend today you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. I am aiming to keep the proceedings and as focused and efficient as possible today. To assist this I have issued NXP to our rule six letter that NX sets out an introduction to the preliminary meeting process. I trust that you have already seen advanced as I will only be providing a brief summary now. You will find information about this application on the planning website national infrastructure project. And we will strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with this website. Because examining authority we'll be using it to communicate with you and provide access to documents throughout the examination. In addition to the live stream a recording of today's meeting will be made available on device gills so the section of the national infrastructure planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting today has finished. With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone stating your name who you are representing each time before you speak. If you are not at a table with a microphone, there is a roving microphone as well. So please wait for one of those to be brought to you before you speak. If you are attending virtually and don't want your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera. For those in the room who do not want to be recorded. There is an area at the back of the room, which you can use and it's outside camera shot. Because the digital recordings that we are making are retained to in published they form a public record that can be that can contain your personal information, and to which the general data protection regulations apply. Only in the rarest of circumstances might we ask you to provide personal information or to type that most of us would prefer to keep private or confidential. Therefore, to avoid the need to edit digital recordings, please try your best not to add information to the public record that you would wish to be kept private or confidential. If you feel that personal information is necessary to provide context to your case, you can provide this in a written document that we can redact before publication. The planning spectris Practice is retaining published recordings for a period of five years from Secretary of State's decision. Additionally, a link to the planning spectris privacy notice was provided now rule six letter and I assume that everybody here today has familiarize themselves with this document in relation to how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set in data protection laws. Please do speak to Jenny savage if you have any further questions on this. This meeting will follow the agenda as set out in Annex A of the rule six letter. It

would be helpful if you have a copy of this in front of you. But I will also ask now for the agenda to be displayed on the screen if we can.

08:30

Thank you The purpose of this morning's meeting is to focus on the way in which this application is proposed to be examined. On that basis, I will only be inviting discussion about procedural aspects of this examination. The purpose of this meeting is not to discuss the merits or any concerns that you may have regarding the application itself. The merits or concerns can only be considered once examination of the application begins, which happens following the close of the preliminary meeting. Notes are being taken off this meeting in this will be placed on the project page of the national infrastructure website and deposited at locations listed in Annex I of the rule six letter as soon as practicable after the close of preliminary meeting. I will now hand over to Mr. wheelchair who will call and introduce the participants today. Thank you.

09:22

Thank you Mr. Pinto. I've been provided by the case team with a list of those interested parties whom we have whom have expressed a wish to be heard today. I'm now going to ask you to introduce yourselves. And when I state your organization's name could you introduce yourself stating your name and who you represent? And which agenda item you wish to speak on. If you're not representing an organization, please confirm your name. Surname, your interest in the application and confirm the agenda item upon wish you upon wish which you wish to see Speak, please Could everybody also state how you wish to be addressed? For example, Mr. Mrs. Miss, et cetera? So please can we start with the applicant and their advisors?

10:15

Good morning to the members of the panel. Good morning to everyone else in the room as well. My name is Alex minich. I'm a partner at Burgess salmon LLP. So I'm a solicitor and I'm here today representing the applicant which is our WP renewables, UK, solar and storage. My preference would be to be referred to as Mr. Mitnick, please. I am joined here today by to my left Mr. Michael Baker, who is the development project manager, our W E renewables UK. Immediately to my right is Miss Laura being b y and g who is a planner at Arup, who are a multidisciplinary consultancy, advising the applicant and miss being will be in control of sharing documents as and when they're required during the course of this hearing and subsequent hearings. So to the extent the panel would like my screen to show anything, please do feel free to address her directly. And then to our left is Mrs. Mary Fisher who was a partner with a company called Absalon Mrs. Fisher is a landscape architect. So she is the project's landscape architect. Expert.

11:58

Thank you very much. So turning to the local authorities, Darlington Borough Council, please.

12:07

Good morning. I'm Lisa. Sorry. I'm Lisa Hutchinson. I'm Development Manager at Darlington Borough Council. My preference would be to be addressed as Mrs. Lisa Hutchinson. Thank you. And I'd like to speak on Item four please. Item four.

12:25

Thank you very much. And to Stockton Borough Council, please.

12:31

Good morning. My name is Helen Boston. I'm Principal planner representing Stockton Borough Council and could be referred to as Mrs. Boston. Thank you.

12:42

Thank you very much. So, I'll now turn to the interested parties, please. We've got a number at the table. Maybe starting from the gentleman. On my left your right. Would you like to introduce yourself please?

13:09

Hello, my name is Philip Watson. I'd like to be dressed as Mr. Philip Watson. I am a Michigan resident, obviously very interested in the development. And I am here just to represent the local village. Okay,

13:25

so you're you're speaking on behalf of yourself? Yes, indeed. Yes. Okay. Any particular agenda item?

13:31

There may be? Yeah, I may interject, if I feel necessary at each end of each agenda item but certainly I'll cover most of my items in any business. Okay.

13:42

We'll make sure we call you.

13:44

Thank you.

13:45

So moving on the table, please. Hello,

13:48

I'm Steve rose. I'm the clerk to Bishop comparison Council. For formality. You can call me Mr. Or much prefer Steve. Not Steven, unless you're my mother. I'm here representing a local authority in that bishops and parish council is the lowest level of local authority representation. And I'm accompanied by Mr. Watson who is also a parish councillor, but as you've heard, as he's speaking for himself, Miss Norman Mulaney, who is the chair of the bishop and parish council. And if he speaks, he will say whether he's speaking on behalf of the parish council or or as a local resident. I should have said to you all as I'm a resident of Darlington, welcome to Darlington historic town in this historic building. It's a shame that we're not meeting in bishopton all the places affected. It would have helped our little local economy if you pay to use Bell Village Hall, rather than seven miles away here, but there you go. I'm here to really talk about what the parish Council's role is in the process. I'm not an expert on planning.

So I think I put item two on the application, but it might be any other item chair is for you to decide. Clearly, as a parish council, we do have a formal role. It is singular and separate from the bishop and village Action Group, which has been described that be evag speaks on behalf of the parish council, which they can't do. They are two separate organizations and be vocal will happily describe that later on. And I wish to talk about from the parish council point of view, the representative stations I've received from people in the parish in a formal sense about about this application, where we see the constant private consultation process where we are completely mystified as to what a conservation village and means under planning law, and really to talk about impact from the point of view of parishioners. Thank you.

15:50

Thank you very much, Steve, that will be really helpful to have that brought together view of the local residents. So thank you. We'll look forward to hearing from you. You've introduced Mr. Mulaney. Do you wish to say anything else?

16:05

Yes. My name is Norman Maloney. I would prefer to be called either Mr. Or Norman. I don't really care. As regards Asians, I would like to speak on I would think, apart from the top two or any of the rest. I'm actually going to speak today as a resident.

16:37

Thank you very much, indeed. Okay. And the gentleman. First, on the right on the table.

16:44

Yeah. Good morning. My name is Mark Smith, I'm chair of the bishopton villages Action Group, which is the B flag reference that you heard earlier. So I don't actually wish to speak today, the points that I was going to speak about have already been submitted in writing. So you should already have that submission.

17:04

Thank you very much. Is there anybody else in the room? Who's an interested party who wishes to speak? Yes, we'll bring a microphone to you and you can introduce yourself. Um, you can, it's your choice. If you'd like to be at the table come to the table.

17:30

So I'm Richard Cowan. Mr. I'm here on behalf of both the CPRE the countryside charity, Durham branch, Durham branch does cover Darlington and Stockton and other areas between the Tyne and the T's. I'm also here because I'm a member of Durham Bird Club, and I frequently look at issues from the point of view, both Bird Club and CPRA. I have given some indication of headings, I think to you already. I don't know if you want me to go through those at the moment. And I know that these may be brought up already by the parish, parish council. But there are certain issues on which I may wish to address you if they don't cover them. And I feel they ought to be brought up.

18:29

wish to comment on anything that's been said?

18:31

Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.

18:32

Cowan. Is there anybody else in the room who has an interested party who wishes to speak? Do you want to raise your hand?

18:45

Okay, I'll turn. Is there any one who wishes to speak today? Please, if you could raise a virtual hand, I'll invite you to introduce yourself. And again, please let us know in which agenda item you wish to speak. So I'm looking at the screen of virtual attendees. I'm not seeing a hand raise. Yes, I am from Claire. I might get this wrong. Tes Teasdale. I think if my eyesight serves me correctly, Colette Teasdale?

19:24

Yes, you are correcting your pronunciation as well. So I'm Claire Teasdale, principal planning officer with Durham County Council. I'm here. You know, sort of in case there's any issues that perhaps need, I need to sort of speak but it's in my 10 intention to sort of be an observing royal

19:46

Thank you very much. Um, would you prefer? How would you like us to address you please?

19:53

Miss Teasdale

19:56

Thank you very much, Miss Teasdale.

19:57

Thank you.

20:01

Anybody else virtually, who would like to raise their hand at this stage? Okay, thank you very much. If anybody else decides that they do wish to speak during the course of this morning's proceedings, for example, make comments in response to representations made by the parties, you may do so. But please raise your hand either physically or using the function within Microsoft Teams issue wish to speak. Are there any other comments on this agenda item? Yes, sir. Thank

20:41

you, Mr. Min Henyk for the applicant, our web. So I meant to include in my introductory remarks, just a brief comment, and forgive me, Mr. Pinto, when you introduce the scheme, I think you refer to it has been a project in excess of 500 megawatts. So I think that was at least what I heard. I think you intended to say 50 megawatts?

21:02

That's correct. So I do apologize if I said 500 by mistake, it's 50 megawatts. Yes. Thank you.

21:09

It's very good to hear you're listening intently. Okay, that concludes this item on the agenda. I'm now going to hand over to Mr. Obey for item two.

21:25

Thanks, Mr. Witcher. We now turn to item two on the agenda. As explained in the rule six letter it is expected that both blended face-to-face and AMPATH virtual and fully virtual events were formed part of the planning inspector's future operating model. Please also see the link to the planning inspector's advice note 8.6 virtual examination events included in the rule six letter. Virtual events may offer wider efficiency benefits, including time and cost savings for the people and organizations involved in the examinations, hearings and inquiries that the inspector carries out. On this basis, virtual events may be used more broadly. Throughout this examination, I therefore, we therefore were confirmed the anticipated format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage, when we provide formal notification of each hearing at least 21 days in advance of it taking place. In Annex B of our rule six letter, we provided an introduction to the preliminary meeting, and the examination process, explaining how it will be conducted and how you can participate. For expediency, I'm assuming that everyone has read this, and therefore, I don't propose to spend time reading it out. It is important that you are clear and your understanding of the process. Therefore, if there is anything you are unclear about, or on which you need clarity, then this is your opportunity to ask. So on the basis of the information set out in Annex B, and the remaining of the rule six letter, are there any questions about the way in which we propose to examine this application?

23:39

Okay, thank you. If you have any specific points to make regarding the draft timetable, please can I ask that you raise these later in the agenda on the item for any questions, please?

23:59

Yeah, as I said in my introduction in the accompanying paperwork, bishops and parish council was mentioned and asked to be here today, without any real clear guidance about what you expected from the parish council, what you what you hoped to get from us. There doesn't seem to be anything specific in the documentation about our role, except that our name was there requested to attend. So in terms of all of that process, I'd be interested to know what you're expecting from us in a formal sense, please.

24:34

If I may take this question. Thank you very much for your comment. You are invited, as you're invited here today, because we obviously submitted you we obviously read your submission in writing to us in we felt that there were issues that perhaps you might want to actually raise with us today. You were invited here in your category is an IP which is the category in which you are invited? I believe that the rule six letter makes it clear. It's certainly the standard text that we normally give in terms of IPs, in

what is expected of participation. But is there any specific questions that you have in terms of your role of IP that you'd like to clarify today?

25:20

No, I thought you were going to ask me to do some other stuff. I mean, I have to say that the statement of common ground is something that I know we've got to complete from our perspective. And that's clear in the in the guidance. And it's, you know, not being a planter. That's an interesting process to go through. But we will, we will complete that. But no, the letter was was clear, I just thought you're gonna ask us to do something else. Thank you.

25:45

Thank you, I believe that you are referring to our request to the applicant in Annex F. In relation to parish council. Can I ask the applicant if they would like to comment on this specific point?

26:04

Sir Alex minich, for the applicant, not in particular, so to say that the applicant has now sent draft statements of common ground to all of the parties that the panel has requested, they should be sought with. So I believe that the parish council ought to have received that draft statement of common ground. And obviously, the applicant is available and happy to have conversations about that statement. If that would be helpful.

26:36

If I'm sending Mr. Roses representation correctly, I think they would welcome some guidance. So the examining authority would be grateful if the applicant could assist bishopton in providing that assistance.

26:50

I mean, I mean, thank you, to our web, so received that this week. And I understand the eighth of August is the deadline is that a hard deadline. And

27:00

so in terms of statements of common ground, statements of common ground tend to evolve throughout the examination. So at the beginning statements of common ground, we'll set the common grounds, the clues in the name, they'll set to common ground between two different parties. And throughout the examination, the hope is that there will be growing agreement or several different topics. So it sets out those topics in what your position is, throughout the examination. Hopefully, there will be some movement on that position throughout six months, that takes that we have to complete examination. So that is their role. Obviously, considering that the first draft of that will set out those things, and we'll set out your initial position, which does not mean that that is the position that you will arrive to at the end of the six month period is

27:53

a joint document, because the one that I've received is covered in our Ws, but you know, livery and everything, which is fine, they've done the work. Also, the analysis has a rag rating, red Amber green

rating, which is their reg rating, it's not ours. And, and so it's very much in our web analysis. It's not coming from the parish council or, or the community. So I was assuming we had to do our version of it, where where we can put our own rock rating on it, or it should be removed altogether for you to do to do the objective analysis.

28:29

So a couple of points on that before I actually asked the applicant to intervene. Drag writing was requested by us the examining authority. It is a way that has been used on several different infrastructure projects, to help us understand where there is agreement in a very straightforward color coded way. So that's the reason why we have asked for REG writing so that it was a request by the examining authority in terms of its content, its content and how it works. I will ask the applicant if they can provide some sort of information of that because obviously, I have not seen that document that you are referring to.

29:16

So thank you, Alex, Minh Henyk for the applicant. And yes, Mr. Rosas acknowledged that the document that was shared with them is a draft prepared by our web it is very much intended to be a starting point for discussion. I think that was explained in the covering correspondence through which was sent over. I would be suggesting that probably the easiest way to make progress on that document would be to arrange for a meeting between the parties. So we the applicants team, I probably wouldn't be in attendance personally, but the applicants team can explain how the document works and what the intention is. Certainly the rank ratings though, are not something that you're obviously held to or fixed or in any way, shape or form, they are simply suggested starting points from the applicant. And equally, the text that has been included in the document, again, is intended to be a help, it's intended to be helpful as a starting point, to the extent that you wanted to change any of the language and the way in which it represents the parish councils position, obviously, you know, that's, that's entirely within your gift.

30:29

And to be clear, the opening of the documents saying is what the bishop and villages Action Group is the same as the parish council, that is not true, that there has to be a separation between the two. So that part of the document just to be clear, I know why you've written it, but it's wrong. And so do I expect Michael to your contact me to have that meeting? To look at that. And secondly, check the reg rating, then you're saying if it's red, it means there's disagreement, it doesn't mean that what we're saying is wrong. Is that was that how's that how the reg rating works?

31:06

Thank you, Mr. Wells. Yes, that that is exactly how the reg rating works. So it is a simple it is to confirm agreement or disagreement on specific topics. Obviously, the judgment if the position is wrong or right, as you put it, to use your terminology will be up to the exci in terms of assessing and writing when we write our reports to the Secretary of State's. So it will not it will not reflect a right or wrong, it will reflect just an agreement or disagreement on topics. And it should reflect the position of both organizations within that specific topic.

31:48

Thank you. I didn't, I didn't understand. Okay, I know I make

31:52

Thank you. If I may add as well, Mr. Ross, just to further explain the process to you in light of your questioning. There'll be isn't an expectation that because there is a statement of common ground with the applicant, that you will be in any way, shape or form limited in your representations to us throughout the examination process. So obviously, you'll still be free and will still accept written representations at any point throughout the examination at at the specific deadlines. Okay. Yes. Could I just ask Colin? Yes, yes, indeed.

32:36

Could I just ask how wide ranging this process is meant to be? I gather, Mr. Rose just got it. But I don't recall receiving it. It's supposed to go to Wall engine. I'm sorry. I used my prosecuting term there for IP injured person instead of interested person. Is it supposed to go to all interested persons or just to councils

33:00

in terms of our communications, so the applicant advertises the the events, and is responsible for that I will ask the applicant to comment on that specific issue. We then contact the people that have registered their interest with us. That's why they're called interested person. So they have submitted to us relevant representation that gives them the status of an interested person. So a person that has expressed an interest in this application. Those are the people that we contact, in addition to other people, but those are exceptional circumstances as well as that story consultees in other organizations. But in terms of your question, the most relevant a bit would be the interesting person status, which again, Vice submitting a relevant representation in terms of consultation how that is advertised, I will ask the applicant to reply.

33:57

Sir, thank you. The hearings in particular, if that's what the question is aimed at was certainly publicized in accordance with all of the relevant statutory requirements. I actually understood Mr. Callen to be asking. And forgive me, I may have misunderstood, but I thought he was asking whether he should have received a draft statement of common ground,

34:20

which you understand me correctly.

34:24

Thank you. Mr. Curran? In which case, if I'm, if I may, we Yes, please. No, we haven't sent your draft statement of common ground and you weren't on the list of parties that the panel identified as being appropriate for a statement of common ground to be advanced with, which is why you haven't received a copy. It's certainly not all interested parties to an examination with whom a statement of common ground assault, it's those particular parties where the panel have indicated that they think it would be helpful to their decision making for for one to be advanced.

34:56

Yeah, I'm grateful for that. reply it is stone happy now that I haven't missed something. Whether I might have wanted to be involved is another matter. And I'll leave that for future.

35:11

And as I have mentioned previously, Mr. Cohen, there is no limit to it in terms of your ability to submit a written representation to us at different points during the examination. Right, I will hand over to Mr. Robot it continuing this item apologies, yes. Apologies.

35:38

Sorry. Thank you. My name is Sean Anderson. I'm involved with bishops and Religious Action Group bishopton villages Action Group have not been do not pass this have not benefited from a statement of common ground. Do you not think as a representative group for residence? Do you not think it is appropriate that a statement of common ground should be prepared in conjunction with the action group who are a separate entity from the parish council?

36:14

We have received your written representations on this specific point and I believe that you do raise this as part of your written representation, which we have considered. Obviously, we are happy to review that point after we have received the original representation, which arrived to us obviously as part of procedural deadline a after we published the rule six letter. So we will review the deposition. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

36:43

Sir. Could I make a brief comment? So thank you. So annex banana for the applicant. I think both Mr. Rose and Mr. Anderson have touched on the conflation that the applicant has made between the Shipton parish council, and the bishop and villages Action Group. The reasons was the the relevant representation from the parish council referred to the relevant representation from the action group. And we therefore thought that it was adopting the positions of the action group. And therefore, the draft statement of common ground, which has been shared with the parish council addresses the points raised by the action group, we were grateful for the explanation that we've had from the two parties, we realized that that's not how they intended to represent the position, we will obviously amend the draft statement of common ground with the parish council so that it is aimed directly at the issues they would like to see raised. And we are happy to talk to the action group as well separately if it would help the panel to have a separate statement of common ground with the action group.

37:58

Thank you for that intervention.

37:59

And I just say if I can, one sentence is that I came new into post and I understand and thank you for saying that. It's just when things are written, they are two separate bodies, and they have to be

represented as such, even though there's a lot of common ground there. But thank you for your statement.

38:20

Thank you, Mr. Rose. In response to this, Mr. Minich. I believe that the best way for us to deal with this situation then is if I could ask in connection, please, for the applicant to confirm by the next deadline that they are happy to prepare a statement of common ground. We with Bishop Princeville, the Jackson group, in addition to going Villages Action Group to actually confirm their position as well, on the next submission to us next deadline, that will be very helpful. I think that it's probably the best way of resolving the issue. Thank you. If I could now hand over to Mr. Your brother. Thank you.

38:57

Thank you, Mr. Pinto. We now turn to IGN again, item three on the agenda, which is the initial assessment of principle issues. For this item, it will be useful if you have an ex see of our role six letter in front of you. I will ask now for a condensed version of the initial assessment of principal issues to be displayed on screen.

39:34

Excuse me, could we make the screen bigger for the benefit of those at the rear of the room please? Thank you.

39:42

Thank you. This list provides an issue an initial framework of issues for the examination going forward, though it does not preclude us from amending the list by removing or adding to the issues. At a later stage in the process, we have nothing further to add at this stage. And although we have no specific requests to speak on this item of the agenda, we have received a deadline a submission PDA dash 003 from Bishop team Villages Action Group requesting three issues to be added to our list of initial assessment of principal issues. And the items in their representation are United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and lifecycle analysis, employment and job creation, stroke, local economic impact them pro under project viability, the ESA, we give further consideration to the initial assessment of principal issues. And we publish an updated version of this, if it feels any changes are required. I will now invite for that comment on the initial assessment of principal issues from any other parties.

41:17

Serve Mr. Alex Minh Henyk for the applicant. I didn't have any comments on the panel's list of principle as you serve. I did have a couple of comments on those which had been suggested by the evag. If I may. Thank you. The first one in relation to sustainable development goals and lifecycle analysis. We we don't object to in principle, but we would note that there is already an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions on a lifecycle basis, which is included and reported on in the climate change chapter that is documented. It's chapter five of the environmental statement and its document reference a PP zero to eight.

42:07

And then, so moving on to the next one employment and job creation. Again, there is an assessment of economic impacts of the scheme, to the extent that they're likely to give rise to likely significant effects in the environmental statement, the reference there is chapter nine of the environmental statement, which is land use and economics. And the document references AP P. 032. So again, so to clarify, to the extent that the examining authority doesn't think that matter is already covered by the principle issues, and I would suggest it probably is, we don't have any objection and it been included. The third matter project viability is one that we would suggest is not relevant to the examining authorities consideration of the application. And, sir, if I may, I wanted to draw your attention expressly to two paragraphs of the national policy statement for energy, which is e n one. So it's the first is the general all encompassing National Policy Statement, which of course was designated in January of this year. And if you were to look, as I'm sure the panel has in the past, at paragraphs 4.1 point 21 and 4.1 point 22, which appear under the heading financial and technical viability. They explained that generally, in deciding to bring forward a proposal for infrastructure, in this case energy development, the applicant will have formed a judgement of the financial and technical viability of their project. And then point 22 says, where the secretary of state considers that the financial viability and technical feasibility of the proposal has been properly assessed by the applicant. It is unlikely to be of relevance in Secretary of State decision making. Now so I realized that's not an absolute bar. But the applicants position is that all of the necessary financial and technical viability work has been carried out. They have chosen to bring forward their application for development, consent and subject subject to any particular questions that the panel had. We didn't think that needed to be considered as a principal issue. Thank you.

44:41

Thank you, Miss Dami. Hey, Nick. We'll have a look at all this together, because the objective of this meeting is to hear your viewpoints. As a panel, we have a look at the applicants view in response to What are the additional presentation we've got here? I know you're talking about the local economics, and you've submitted documents within and as acknowledged, and then the reference to the the overarching policy documents we acknowledge, as well, collectively, we have a look at everything together. And, of course, as a partner, if we have any additional information that we need from yourselves, Mr. Mahina, then we get back to you.

45:42

So at the ESA, we give further consideration to initial assessment of principal issues, and we publish an updated version of this, if it feels any changes are required. And that follows off with the last statement I made to Mr. Mahir neck. I will now invite for that comment on the initial assessment of principal issues from any other parties.

46:13

Now

46:17

yes, sir, with my CPRE hat on, we are obviously looking at the balance with Rick, as you will, obviously B and the Secretary of State ultimately, at the balance between the production of renewable energy, visa vie losses. And I see that there is one bullet point about the intended generating capacity. And we've had a discussion already about 50 and 500. Obviously, it's above 50. But I noticed going through

I forgotten which document it was the introduction document, that there is a different out there, panels producer, direct current. But obviously, that has to be converted to AC for transmission. There has been an issue in Durham recently, which I'm sure Miss Teasdale will be aware of counsel being taken to court because of one application that they approved, which was said to be for 50 below 50 megawatt, where there was a distinct possibility that it was in excess, well in excess of seven F 60. And that included and allowing for any sort of shrinkage that there may be from the panels in future. I couldn't see anything in this document. And I could be wrong, which indicated what difference if any, there would be between the direct current produced by the panels and the actual current that goes into the, into the system once it's converted to AC? And it seemed, from what arguments that we've had, apparently in Durham, that there may be a reduction, which are we working on so the end, when we talk about the intended generating capacity? Are we talking about the capacity that is actually generated by the panel's themselves? Or what ultimately may be sent into the system? And if so, is there any significant difference between the two that may affect the balance?

48:45

As the applicant to answer

48:50

sir, thank you, Mr. Mun Henryk for the applicant, I believe the case that Mr. Caron is referring to relates to the threshold between development which requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which is in the case of energy generating infrastructure, it's schemes which are below a 50 megawatt threshold, which the national policy statements which have recently been published now tells us should be calculated with reference to the AC exporting capacity of that scheme as measured at the inverters for the scheme. So, that was what the case related to I would suggest that particular issue of where you stand as relating to that threshold is of background relevance to this examination. This examination being in relation to a different category of project something called a nationally significant infrastructure project, for which the threshold is that the generating capacity is in excess of five 50 megawatt AC, which is the reason why, if I misheard, or if I heard Mr. Pinto correctly at the outset of proceedings I was, I was keen just to make sure that we had a shared understanding amongst the examination as to how the project has been described. And it has been described as being one in excess of 50 megawatts for that very reason. So, with respect, I don't think that case is of direct relevance to the matters that we are considering here today, insofar as there is any ambiguity in the application documents, which we would suggest there isn't. But if there are particular references that you'd like us to look at, we're very happy to take those away. But I and forgive me, I don't have the references myself immediately to hand. But I know the application documents refer to the grid connection agreement that the applicant has with the distribution network operator. So this is where the applicant will export electricity to the grid. That grid connection agreement is for the export of up to 180 megawatts AC electricity. So that is, for all intents and purposes, the intended generating capacity of the scheme.

51:24

I don't dispute that this is a bulk 50 megawatts scheme. I just wanted to confirm that we weren't being confused that we were giving a figure that was relevant to the direct current from the panel's rather than the A.

51:39

Thank you. Thank you very much. for that. I'm afraid I'm going to have to sort of try and bring this issue in this discussion to a close, as I have explained at the beginning of this meeting, we are here to discuss the procedure through which we'll examine, I feel that we are dwelling towards the merits of the application and how not just how the application will be looked at. But to give you some reassurance on this, and can I ask perhaps, Miss Bing, if we could pull the sharing a little bit further down. For the next bullet points? No, still on principle of the proposed development, please do enter Exactly. So you can see that in terms of identification of the principal issues, which are the issues that we want to discuss in that we will discuss in a lot more detail, then what we're going to do today, there is the intended generator capacity for proposed development, having regard to the draft development, consent order reference to an output capacity of over 50 megawatts and maximization of the potential of the site. So in terms of the project and the way that we are looking in terms of energy capacity, this is one of the things that will actually dwelve into further detail. But I feel that we need to actually close the discussion now in terms of try to not stray too much into the merits of the of the application. Mr. Rose, I will bring you in if your comment is about the merits, the how we are going to look at the application and the process, not the merits of the application. Because as I have explained that, we

53:22

thank you, it will be so I'm Steve rose, and Clark Bishop and parish council, just in terms of the issues. I do apologize, Mr. I have been described. Yeah, well, yeah. But I'm not mentioned in the issues is the things that you would expect residents have been in touch with about some cynicism about this whole process about whether this is a done deal, or whether this is a genuine process. I don't know how you prove that. But I think it's right there. It's a real issue in today's meeting and the whole process going forward as to whether the decision has already been taken. And I have to say that is a real issue. And then the side issues which I thought our colleague Mr. Cowan was going to raise about protected species about the nature of the area, and about the proximity of this to to settlements that are conservation areas, aren't there, you know, if you'd like the aesthetics of all of this, isn't there and the issues, it's all the technical stuff intrinsically linked to the proposed development, which I'm sure our web can can prove that it makes all those things but it doesn't deal with the spirit of we who live in the area, have our businesses in the area and have moved here to live a particular lifestyle and how this will just completely change it and alter it forever.

54:45

Thank you for that. Mr. Wells. I would like to ask the applicant if they would like to comment in terms of consultation and involvement of the local community.

54:57

Sir, thank you Alex minich For the applicant. So just very briefly, the applicants position would be that it has engaged with and consulted with the local community. During the preparation of the application, there are. The consultation report been a document, which was submitted as part of the application sets out how that process was carried out. And I'm not sure there's anything specific I would add to that, at this stage, in so far as Mr. Rose refers to the assessment of the impact of the scheme on the local area, the applicant is acknowledges that there is an impact of bringing forward a scheme of the

assault on the local area, it has carried out a wide range of assessments, which have sought to identify what the nature of that impact is, and sought to set that out for the panel. And then subsequently the Secretary of State to consider. And again, so there's there's nothing specific that I would draw your attention to in those assessments are safe to say that they are there, and they are publicly available amongst the application documents at the back of the room or on the pins website. Thank you.

56:23

Thank you, Mr. Munich. Mr. Rose. I would also add to that, that in terms of your concerns, which I believe that you have expressed previously to us in writing, so we are aware of those concerns as well, in those documents will be part of the examination process. So they have been accepted into the examination. So this is a situation that we are aware of. Thank you, Mr. Rose. Mr. Deveaux. Would you like to continue, please? Oh, thank you.

56:53

Thank you, Mr. Pinto. Are there anyone virtually who would like to ask any question, please? No, I can't see anybody on the board. I will now if anything does arise following this meeting, please submit any comments to us by a deadline one, which is if August 2024. I will now hand over to Mr. Pinto will present the next item.

57:28

Thank you. Sorry about that. So now I would like us to turn to Item four of the agenda, which is draft examination timetable. For this item, it would be useful if you have Annex D of the row six letter in front of you. And I would also like to ask this draft timetable to be shared on screen. Thank you. I can see that. Thank you. In the interest of brevity, I don't propose reading this out in folly. But we'll highlight some key points in existence obstruct examination timetable for the next six months from today until completion on Thursday the 23rd of January 2025. It includes the draft dates for hearings, the deadlines for the submission of written documents. It also includes dates for the examining authority to issue documents such as the rule light letter, our first set of written questions, the final itinerary for companies such inspections if required, or our proposed schedule of changes to the draft the CL NS report for implications on European sites. Please note that time for submission on each day to date is is 2359. So one minute to midnight. DX is proposing to hold the first issue specific hearing later today. This hearing will consider two components of Dubai skill solar need for the proposed development alternatives considered and then deal with some issues related to order land in the draft development consent order and agenda for this meeting has been issued with rule six letter in Annex F. The first issue specific hearing will then be followed by to open floor hearings tomorrow Wednesday, one at 10 and another one at 11 at 6pm. So at 1800. This is proposed as to increase opportunities for all those who wish to participate to do so. An open floor hearing is an opportunity for individuals and community groups to put the views forward verbally to the examining authority. And agenda for this meeting has been issued in the draw six letter in Annex G, which explains what notes should be just based on industry depends on representations previously made in writing not to simply repeat matters previously covered in a written submission, but rather provide further detail and explanation to help inform the examining authority as he told him time to time Ball as soon as possible after this week's hearings, we will also issue our rule like letter which finalizes the timetable. At the same time we'll also issue our first set of written questions. We can all we can also if considered necessary at any point during the

examination issue specific requests for information from limited parties in this is known as a rule 17 letter and accompanied site inspection may be held on week commencing the 14th of October that is what is scheduled at the moment with the final itinerary for the company's site inspection to be issued by examining authority on Thursday, the 18th of September 2024. I will talk to you more about satisfactions and under item five. So I would ask any questions in terms of site inspections to wait until we reach that agenda item please. I am conscious that it is a tight, very tight timetable at some places. But we tried to avoid scheduling hearings during any of the main school holidays in the for our timetable has been shaped and informed by that we have received specific requests to talk on this item from the applicant I believe and from Darlington Borough Council. And we have also received some comments in writing a deadline a submission PDA 003 from bishopton villages extra action group. So I would suggest that perhaps we start with the comments made by the applicant first and then I will go to Darlington Borough Council. And then I will ask be VAG to intervene as well. And then anyone else that might want to comment on the proposed timetable. So if I could ask the applicant to intervene, please thank you.

1:01:47

Thank you, sir, Mr. Annex mechanic for the applicant, sir, the request which was made by the applicant was to explore whether there was any flexibility, which could be taken advantage of particularly around the early part of the examination timetable that we're looking at now, and particularly the second round of hearings, which are listed for the week of second of September. And then the corresponding deadline to which comes before those hearings for understandable reasons to enable everyone to have a look of written materials before the hearings take place that deadline to is on the 21st of August. So as with I'm sure many involved in the examination, there are some holidays during that period. Amongst the applicants team, which is one of the drivers for the request. We're also conscious that we expect other interested parties may have holiday constraints. That said, we will obviously always do our best to meet any eventual timetable that the examining authority puts forward. Now our our suggestion was to push that second set of hearings back by a week if there was any possible possibility to do that, which would see them starting the week of ninth of September, with a corresponding delay to deadline to from the 21st of August to the 30th of August, which we thought might help all parties to the examination. Both review the material that submitted at deadline one and to the extent that they wish to comment on that deadline to or obviously prepare answers to your first round of written questions, which are due to be published on while following this hearing. i We are obviously entirely in your hands subject to other constraints. Any other constraints. There may be interesting to note, though, that I believe both the council and the villages Action Group have expressed similar requests the thinking then within the art of the possible and whether there's anything else that could be done to help all parties the the only other thought that we've had on the applicant side is whether there is any indication as to when your written questions are expected to be available, because to the extent that those are available sooner rather than later after the preliminary meeting, recognizing that you will have constraints on your side that might help alleviate perhaps some of the pressure on deadline to thank you.

1:04:29

Can I just clarify what do you mean more specifically, in terms of when to written questions will be available? So would that be an early draft of written questions or that would actually be a date for the written questions to be published?

1:04:42

Thank you, sir. It was aimed at the date of publication data as the case of absolutely which is that we know they will come after the preliminary meeting as quickly as possible, but we don't know when that will be. Exactly. Thank you.

1:04:58

Okay, thank you very much. All right. Can I ask now Darlington Borough Council if you'd like to comment as well, please.

1:05:12

Thank you. So Lisa Hutchinson Darlington Borough Council, again, similar to the applicant our we'd like to explore the possibility of looking with the some flexibility for the first round, or the second round of hearings that week commencing the second of September. Our particular issue is that our landscape consultant has a pre booked holiday for the first two weeks. So obviously, the applicant was suggested moving it back further week. Our suggestion it's all a request would be, is it possible to move it back for another two weeks? I appreciate that then knocks on to Deadline three and all that that entails. Again, looking at the art of the possible, our alternative suggestion was whether landscape matters could be considered in the second round of issues specific hearings, which I think is identified as the week commencing the 25th of November. So that was our particular issue. But just to confirm beyond that with content with the other dates, they don't raise any particular issues.

1:06:08

Thank you for that. Mr. Mrs. Hunter. Can I ask as well, now the bishops and villages action group to come in if they wanted to explain further their views and their submission to us in terms of timetable?

1:06:26

Yeah, I

1:06:27

don't think we've really got anything further to go than what was already submitted in the written permission. Thank

1:06:33

you very much, which obviously, we will receive. So thank you very much for those comments on that specific issue. We have, we have obviously reviewed your written submissions to us and we have had some discussions. Obviously, as you all are aware, we do have a requirement to finish to carry out examination within a six month period of time. And I am afraid that we are constrained both at the beginning and at the end of the timetable. Because obviously at the end of the timetable, we are reaching Christmas New Year period, because we are to finish just after just after the beginning of August. And we are also a little bit constrained. At the beginning because of natural school holidays and summer breaks, we have considered changes. And we will consider it further. But obviously, it is invaluable for us to carry the examination within the six month period that we are required, without having any deadlines or any hearings during a two month period, which would basically be the month of

August, and then the beginning of September. So it would be nearly two months, so a month and a half to two months. And obviously that will affect extremely our timetable within six month periods. So we'll have a further look at that. But obviously, I would just like to highlight that we are heavily constrained by this. And not just by our own availability, but actually the availability of the resources within the whole of the planning inspectorate, which we'll have to take into consideration. So any changes will have quite significant implications at this point. But we will definitely have a look at that and see if there is some flexibility. Mrs. Hutchinson, I'm particularly interested in what you said in terms of the weakness. So am I right, in assuming that the availability of the landscape witness is your main concern? In relation to that specific week of hearings? Yes, it is.

1:08:48

Effectively a lone operator, so there's not anybody else within the business that could step in in his place. So you know, it's it's having the person that's written the report on our behalf to represent us and speak to the and answer the questions that that are raised. So this it's it's the availability of our landscape witness. Okay.

1:09:05

Thank you very much for everyone that participated on this specific item. We'll take those comments away, and we will consider them further. And then obviously, we'll confirm them when we issue the role aid letter. Thank you very much. Can I ask if there is anyone else that would like to comment on specific timetable that we have proposed? Mr. Hutchinson? Yes,

1:09:32

sir, Mr. Min Henyk for the applicant and apologists.

1:09:35

Thank you.

1:09:36

Absolutely fine. So I had another comment. The applicant had another request in relation to the latter part of the timetable. Would it be helpful for me to explain the reasoning there now,

1:09:48

will this be related with the Christmas New year periods? It is indeed related to the Christmas and New Year variable. So I think that we will be in a similar position but just just for new comment, but yes, please doo doo doo Carry on.

1:10:01

Thank you, sir. And recognizing that the draft timetable has clearly been drafted with a view to minimizing disruption that will inevitably be caused by that Christmas period for which we're very grateful on the African side. I'm sure others in the room are as well. The again, thinking about the art of the possible the request that we had was whether it would be possible for if there are further written questions at that stage, which are indicated by item 18. I believe it is on the draft timetable.

1:10:36

I believe it's an item item 19. Ah, thank you. No, no, actually, apologies. No, you're absolutely right. And item 18. Yes. Publication? Yes. I've written questions. Yes.

1:10:45

Thank you. If if there was any prospect of those being published slightly earlier, we had in mind potentially Friday, the 13th of December. That would be a big help to the applicants team if that were possible.

1:11:01

Okay, we'll take that away. And we'll consider that as well. Thank you. Any further comments that anyone would like to make content draft timetable?

1:11:10

So just gravely, that Richard Curren, again, CPR is just to support if I may, the council and they're going to because I, in fact, have holiday week, commencing the second of September as well. I presume if there are things then and we are unable to attend, we will be able to put things in in writing.

1:11:32

Certainly. Absolutely. Any further comments? Yes, thank you. I'm snowmen, Lenny, all

1:11:43

the changes all the requests for flexibility by RW we are driven by a money aspect. There is no benefit at all to the people sat this side of the room. In changing these because we all have jobs, we all have other things to do. So anything you want from us, we've got to fit in to our daily life. It is their daily life. So it needs to be considered, because they're putting pressure on us to deliver questions and answers very, very quickly. That can be difficult at times.

1:12:20

Thank you Mister Money. We were recognized constraints to time pressures on on all all of those involved in the examination. But thank you for that comment. Yes, thank you. It's

1:12:34

Sean Anderson from bishopton villages Action Group. I understand your comments about maintaining a timetable. But I would like to stress the point that the principles of natural justice must prevail, and that everybody must be given the opportunity to be heard and respond accordingly. I would like to see that assurance from yourself.

1:12:59

Absolutely agree. And we're willing to endeavor to always provide opportunities for everyone to comment in writing or orally, giving appropriate notification of any hearings or any deadlines. Thank you. Can I ask if there is anyone virtually that would like to come in on this specific topic now? And if so, raise their hands please on the virtual button. I can't see any hands raised? Yes, Mr. Melnick,

1:13:37

sir. Thank you. I just wanted to reply very quickly to Mr. Maloney is common, if I may be the changes that have been suggested or requested by our who are not driven by money? That's absolutely not the case. We've I'd hoped to explain that we thought the changes would be of assistance to all parties to the examination that certainly part of the thinking on our side, we thought slight changes towards the end of the summer period, and before Christmas would actually free up committed time that those involved in the examination process might have a thank you.

1:14:13

Thank you.

1:14:16

If there are no further questions, I will then proceed with this item. So additionally, all parties should be aware that anytime after the last deadline or events that are advertised in our timetable, we may decide under Section 99 in the act that the examination is complete. This may be before the end of the six month period, which is a statutory period for the completion of the examination. In any case, when the examination authority has completed this examination of the application, it must inform each of the interested parties. I also want to take the opportunity to highlight the importance of ensuring that information is submitted in accordance with set deadlines. Whilst the XA does have the ability to accept late submissions into the examination DCS at Our discretion in should only be in exceptional circumstances as light submissions restrict the ability of others parties involved in the examination to respond to the information and can therefore jeopardize the examination timetable. The same applies for information submitted in advance of the respective deadlines or information being submitted outside of the prescriptive deadlines. Before I move on to the next item, can I check if there is anything else that anyone would like to add in relation to the timetable? Virtually I can't see any hands raised in the room oh, virtually. So I will now hand over to my colleague, Mr. wheelchair who will take us through the next item. Thank you.

1:15:45

Thank you, Mr. Pinto. We now turn to item five on the agenda hearings and accompanied site inspection. You'll be aware from the format of this week's events that the examining authority is now able to hold hearings as a blend as blended events. These include in person meetings with other parties being able to attend virtually as we mentioned in item two, we will confirm the anticipated format of any hearings to be held during the examination stage when we provide formal notification of each hearing at least 21 days in advance of it taking place. In addition to the hearings this week, we've also reserved the week commencing the second of September for compulsory acquisition hearings, and further issues specific hearings. The week commencing the 14th of October and the week commencing the 25th of November have also been reserved for additional hearings, including compulsory acquisition hearings if required. Apart from the comments we've had about the timetable, are there any comments that anyone wishes to raise with regard to the use of virtual hearings? Thank you. Turning now to accompanied site inspection. We will already made an unaccompanied site inspection from publicly accessible land on the fourth and fifth of June of this year. The inspection was principally undertaken in order to view the application site and surrounding area from publicly accessible lands, including highways and public rights of way by car and on foot. The notes of this inspection were

available to view on the project page of the national infrastructure website. And they have the examination Library Reference Evie one dash oh one accompanied site inspection This provision is sheduled in the draft time table for the week commencing the 14th of October. The final itinerary will be published at least five working days in advance of the event taking place and will include information regarding deadline for confirmation from interested parties have their desire to attend the accompanied site inspection. Company site inspections will only be necessary to view land to which there is no public right of access, or which no clear view from nearby locations with open public access. The purpose of a company's site inspections is familiarization only, and no discussion of the merits of the proposed development will be entertained during the company's site inspection. We have received a deadline a suggested locations for accompanied and unaccompanied site inspections from the applicant, Darlington Borough Council and bishops and villages Action Group, which I will now give an opportunity to comment on. But before I do, it should be noted that submissions made deadline a do not preclude any further requests for site visits during the examination. It may be that after you've had the opportunity to review what has been said at the hearings and in any additional documents. interested persons may be wish may wish to suggest other or further prospective locations for site inspections during the examination. However, there should be good reason for doing so. It may be that the examiner authority also does does decide to carry out further and accompany site inspections at any point to an examination with any notes of such inspections to be placed on the project page of the national infrastructure website. I will now invite invite the applicant to comment on site inspections.

1:19:48

Sir Thank you, Alex Mina Henyk for our web the applicant. So obviously to general level the applicant thinks site inspections are a sensible idea or I'm very pleased to hear that you've you've been out to see the sites already. You will have I expect the submissions that the applicant has made around suggested site locations for an accompanied site inspection there at paragraph 5.1 of our deadline a submissions which are PDA 001, we have actually been reflecting on that list and realize that there is an additional location that we thought it would be helpful for the examining authority to see it would sit quite nicely with the broad route that would be followed based on the locations that are listed in that previous submission. And so that additional location would be one that would be between stillington and old stillington corresponds broadly to viewpoint 25, at old still in point, old stillington. From the applicants viewpoint analysis, which are obviously available in the environmental statement and supporting documents. Apparently, there is an opportunity to pull in with the many buffs in that location if driving West. And we therefore thought it would be a sensible, additional location. I do also have some brief comments on the location suggested by the action group if that would be helpful to hear those at this time.

1:21:35

It would be interesting, you're talking about the accompany site inspection, aren't you? Yes,

1:21:39

sir. Mr. Mun Henrickson, the African Yes, that's right. Forgive me Have I misunderstood the question?

1:21:49

No, I just wanted to confirm I wasn't 100% Sure if you felt that that new suggestion, which obviously we haven't received, as part of your submission implies that it can be carried out and accompanied or is excess required or not. That was the intent of my question.

1:22:11

Thank you so much for explaining it, I believe it could form part of either the accompanied or the unaccompanied site visits or its public public location.

1:22:24

Certainly, if you if you want to comment on the action groups, comments, that would be helpful.

1:22:30

Thank you. So referring now to the application, the action groups, deadline a submissions which are PDA 003. Broadly speaking, sir, I think the locations that they've identified on the drawings that they've submitted to you correspond roughly broadly, with the locations that the applicant has submitted would be appropriate areas of the locality to visit. So at a broad level, we agree that those sorts of views are helpful for the examining authority to see what we can't quite identify from the drawing. And I don't believe a written list of locations has been provided is whether these are public or private locations. And to the extent that they are private locations, the applicant would be querying whether the appropriate view points or locations to visit as part of the accompanied site visit, taken into account the assessment work that has been carried out by the applicant in support of the application, particularly noting that there is a residential visual amenity assessment within the application documents. That's app, a pp 137. The findings of which were the the threshold the residential visual amenity threshold was not reached in relation to any private dwellings.

1:24:24

Thank you for that. We've heard your comments. We've obviously got the the action groups comments. I think at this stage, we will reflect on the proposed itinerary for the company site inspection. And, you know, we'll deal with that in due course. I see Mr. Watson's hand is up.

1:24:51

Thank you. Just nodding. One of the points that the developer has made there is that they believe They have made suitable impact assessments visual impact assessments as part of their planning, submission. I think speaking on behalf of all of the local community, I'm sure that when it comes to an accompanied inspection, where residents are looking out to the sea of glass, from their bedroom windows, when they wake up in the morning, they would like you probably to have a look and see exactly what impact it will have on everyday life for those individuals who are surrounded by the solar farm.

1:25:43

The gentleman there said, we're basically we've the you, the developer feels that they've made suitable studies in the impact visual impact studies, that negates that request. So I will put it to you if individuals feel that they really would like you to visit their private property to look at what they're going to be looking at for the next 40 years, would you be prepared to do so?

1:26:08

Thank you, Mr. Watson. We absolutely would. And that's the point of the site visits. So rest assured, it's our intention to get a thorough view of the proposed development. Thank you.

1:26:30

Yeah, thank you, Mr. Wilshere. I might be asking at the wrong time. And I apologize if I am. But I'm gonna ask anyway. There are a number of other solar farms in the vicinity of this proposed one as well. Where does the site inspection take into account other developments around the this particularly in in County Durham area, because it is, you know, put together with other solar farms is changing the nature of the whole area where we live.

1:27:00

Thank you for the comment. In broad terms, we do look at the cumulative effect is the technical word for it of other developments. In terms of the site visit, we were restricted generally to you know, the the extent of the proposed development that we're looking at. But we we I can assure you that we do take into account the other developments in the area and we're cognizant of them. We've we've we've seen them in our own on a company site inspection.

1:27:49

Sorry, just to just to further add to the comments made earlier, the list suggested route that we've already submitted was compiled with with that in mind, so the specific points highlighted on that suggested route. were put there for that reason, just to support the previous comment that was made.

1:28:13

We've got to work on the the itinerary. We've got the comments, we've got the applicants submission. We'll be working up a final route for it. So we will take it into account I can absolutely assure you of that.

1:28:34

Okay, send to the local authorities. Darlington Borough Council, do you wish to comment on the company site inspection?

1:28:45

Thank you, sir. Lisa Hutchinson Darlington Borough Council. No, I think our written submission just confirmed we're content with the viewpoints that had already been looked at. We didn't have anything further to add. Thank you.

1:28:57

Stockton, did you want to say anything?

1:29:00

No, sir. Thank you. We're happy with the suggested list.

1:29:03

Okay. Anybody else in the room? wish to comment any further on site inspections? Over there's a gentleman at the back. I will get a microphone to you. If you could state your name, please. and who you represent

1:29:27

Alan Pilkington just working.

1:29:30

Pilkington? Yes.

1:29:32

This is a residence part time, unpaid assistant groundskeeper of bishopton Playground. I made a suggestion for unaccompanied site visit to the playground. I have not heard that mentioned in you when you gave a list of people who would submitted suggestions. I didn't. I wasn't sure whether include in my own

1:30:01

Thank you, Mr. Pilkington. I'm sure we have it, I suppose the playground? Yes, I will check that we have. And if we haven't, I will make sure that we receive it. I assume we've got it. I'll be honest, I haven't read it yet. But it's noted and we will take it into account.

1:30:27

Mr. Wheelchair Can Can I please intervene as well. Just just to confirm, I believe that the playgrounds that you're relevant representation, the first two is actually in bishopton. Is that Is that Is that correct? Yes. And can I ask if you have had a chance to look at the net scenery that we have published of our previous site visit that we have the three of us attended and done as the panel. I we walked through, I believe the area that is particularly sensitive in that you're raising now at the moment. So I just wanted to make sure that you were aware of site visit that we have done because I think we have been to that site, I just want to confirm it, if it is the same site or not.

1:31:21

I look to the itinerary where you visited and you've been to the school and middle lane, middle lane. I don't think you went down cubby Castle lane to the other side of the school, where the playground is situated and has a particularly attractive open aspect that will be no longer open or green.

1:31:46

We'll have a further look into that. And I will actually clarify the notes of our site visit in terms of where we have been but I have checked my notes and copy Castle lane, church view and mill lane. We're on our itinerary. But I will confirm that any farming ask you to submit that specific I know you have done already. But if I could ask you to actually confirm that point, then we can have another look at that specific issue. But just to give you some assurance, I believe that we have seen that specific playgrounds. But but we will clarify that point. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. I will hand over to Mr. Wheelchair now.

1:32:31

Thank you, Mr. Mulaney.

1:32:35

I would just like to add to Mr. Putin's comments. The playground is actually a public protected space. It's right at the end of the school playground is the Bishopston Playground. It took 35 years for the parish council to actually put that in place. It will be a shame that is of no use to anybody because of what's going to be built beside it. And behind it. That's all I need to add.

1:33:07

Thank you Mr. Maloney.

1:33:14

Anybody else in the room for I turn to Okay. Mr. Anderson.

1:33:22

Thank you. I'm quite concerned that the applicant thinks that just because the suggested viewpoint is from a private residence is of no concern to the examining authority. Could you confirm categorically the viewpoints from private residences are of concern and of interest to you.

1:33:48

Mr. Anderson, they are of concern. Yes.

1:33:56

Anybody further in the room? Virtually? No, thank you very much on that. I will now hand back to Mr. Pinto, who will call and introduce participants.

1:34:16

Thank you, Mr. Wiltshire. I think that we are now on Item six procedural decisions. Apologies. I am also mindful of the time and I did say at the beginning of my introduction that we would have a break if we had to go much further past 1130 We would have a break at 1130. Can we do have two more items to go through one of them. I expect it to be done fairly quickly. And then there is going to be any other business which is going to be our final item before we close the hearing. Can I just ask if anyone would object quickly if we just press on and continue, because I do not feel that we will go on for much longer. So instead of having a break now, I'm going to suggest that we perhaps press on in continuing and finish a little bit earlier. Can I just ask around the table, if anyone has any objections to that? Now, can I ask if anyone in the audience has any objections to that? Can? Yes, please. Absolutely fine. In that case, we will adjourn the meeting now for 15 minutes. And we will come back. It's a 10 to 12. Thank you